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SUBJECT: FRENCH REACTION TO DEMARCHE FOR EU GAERC

REF: A. STATE 198361

[1](#)B. STATE 201513

Classified By: PolMC Josiah Rosenblatt for reasons 1.4 (B & D).

[1](#)1. (SBU) Deputy Political Minister-Counselor met November 3 with MFA Common Foreign and Security Policy CFSP unit deputy director Pascal Le Deunff to receive an informed French reaction to ref A and B demarches for the November 7 meeting of EU foreign ministers. The points were also shared with European Directorate DAS-equivalent Caroline Ferrari. Le Deunff limited his remarks to foreign policy issues within his brief.

[1](#)2. (C) Balkans: Le Deunff said new UN envoy Martti Ahtissari would join the lunch and saw general agreement among Contact Group countries on policy guidelines toward Kosovo, notwithstanding some remaining Russian reservations. Noting that Ahtissari would have only a single deputy (i.e., no NATO or EU deputy), Le Deunff commented that EU-Ahtissari coordination still needed to be worked out. France was in favor of allowing him enough flexibility to negotiate; at the same time, he would have to take note of EU positions. Given the important incentive represented by European integration, the EU would insist on being involved; there would be "no repetition of Aceh," where Ahtissari acted independently. Asked about Serbia, Le Deunff said EU integration was also an important incentive in dealing with Belgrade; like Russia, France also hoped to use its traditionally good relations with Serbia to advance the final status process.

[1](#)3. (C) Iran: Le Deunff said France saw a need for continued firmness on the nuclear issue, human rights, Israel (in light of the Iranian President's recent statements), and the Middle East Peace Process (not further specified). The GOF still hoped Iran would re-engage in negotiations and saw the upcoming November 24 IAEA BOG meeting as the next milestone. The GOF, he said, was not yet prepared to refer Iran to the UNSC, although it believed it was important to keep up the pressure on Iran and give Iran the sense that UNSC referral was approaching.

[1](#)4. (C) Syria-Lebanon: Le Deunff said the EU's conclusions document on the Mehlis report and next steps was still under discussion. France wished to maintain pressure on Syria to cooperate in the investigation of the Hariri assassination. Le Deunff was emphatic that France would focus in Brussels on the Mehlis investigation and restoration of Lebanese sovereignty, and not Syria's role with respect to terrorist infiltration into Iraq. That said, France would not object to a general call for Syrian cooperation with its neighbors. (Note: UK Embassy counterparts informed us that the French EU delegation in Brussels has objected to any mention of Iraq or Syrian support for Palestinian rejectionists in the Syria portion of the draft November 7 GAERC declaration. End note.) Asked about the UK invitation to President Asad to attend the Barcelona summit (see also para 5 on Iraq), Le Deunff said Syrian participation was "legitimate" and that Asad therefore could not be disinvited, even if he was not welcome. Moreover, at this juncture there were no UN sanctions being imposed on Syria, which should not be equated with Burma or Zimbabwe. Chirac would not seek a meeting with Asad, but Le Deunff conjectured that, if Asad sought contact with him, Chirac would speak frankly.

[1](#)5. (C) Iraq: Le Deunff did not expect much discussion beyond a general welcoming of the results of the constitutional referendum and a reiteration of EU programs to support stabilization and reconstruction, including JUSTLEX. Asked whether EU election monitoring for the December 15 elections was under consideration, Le Deunff said the security situation would rule out it out (as with the referendum). Le Deunff expressed France's extreme displeasure over the UK Presidency's decision to invite the Iraqi FM to attend the Barcelona Summit as an observer, given that Iraq was not part of the Barcelona process or the Mediterranean. France, he said, planned to take up with the British at the GAERC.

[1](#)6. (C) MEPP: Le Deunff stressed EU efforts to support Wolfensohn and Ward and to help the Palestinians "take control of the street," to which France favored reinforcing the UK-led EU policing mission beginning January 1 with an additional 30 experts. The EU hoped to assist the Palestinians in reorganizing their security apparatus. Le

Deunff said the EU was also preparing a support mission for the Gaza-Egypt border at Rafah, with which he said Israel agreed in principle. He emphasized that the EU's role should go beyond mere observation or monitoring to include a third-party "good offices" dimension that would allow the EU to serve as a mediator if necessary. Discussions with the Israelis and Palestinians, he said, would begin starting November 7.

17. (C) Belarus: Le Deunff said the EU would warn Lukashenko against human rights abuses in advance of the 2006 elections. He said the EU was prepared to move to additional sanctions; nothing was specifically under consideration, but nor was anything specifically excluded. The EU, he said, would support an OSCE observation mission for the elections. He expressed satisfaction that the existence of an opposition candidate and said the EU would continue to work with the U.S. and Russia toward finding the best possible outcome. Asked specifically about the idea of not recognizing Lukashenko's election, Le Deunff did not exclude the possibility but thought such action premature; France preferred to see how things went at the time of the elections.

18. (C) CFSP: Deputy PolCouns asked whether Le Deunff sensed, in the wake of French and Dutch rejection of the EU constitutional treaty, an increased EU emphasis on using CFSP and ESDP to advance European integration. Le Deunff responded that this was definitely the case and that the French and Dutch had not voted against CFSP or ESDP. He cited European polls that showed that most Europeans wanted the EU to have a larger role on the international stage. He cited two obstacles that needed to be overcome in the immediate future, one institutional and the other financial. On the first, France was interested in finding new ways to reinforce Solana's position within the existing treaties. On the second, CFSP currently had a budget of only 60 million euros, which needed to be raised to about 300 million. Le Deunff claimed that ministers at the EU informal summit at Hampton Court had approved a larger role for Solana, and had responded positively to Solana's call for an increased budget.

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